**Spring 2019 Course Descriptions**

**Instructor:** Mikko Tuhkanen  
**Course:** ENGL 481.906  
**Title:** Diasporic Modernities: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Sylvia Wynter (Senior Seminar)

**Description:** This class introduces students to contemporary theories of “modernity,” with particular emphasis on the claim that when we speak of “Western modernity,” we must speak of it as a “diasporic modernity”—that we must recognize the constitutive role that the African diaspora had, and continues to have, in the formation of our modern world. We approach our topic by focusing on the work of three major thinkers of diasporic modernity: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Sylvia Wynter. We will move from Wright’s depiction of urban modernity in *Native Son* and his controversial account of the decolonizing world in *Black Power* (his travel narrative to the Gold Coast), to Baldwin’s imaginative response, in such texts as “Notes of a Native Son,” *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, and *Another Country*, to what he considered Wright’s failures, to Wynter’s effort to reconfigure modernity through her poetic project of “being-human-as-praxis.” Our primary readings will be supplemented with scholarly texts.

**Proposed Readings:** Richard Wright: *Native Son*; *Black Power*; essays  
James Baldwin: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; *Another Country*; essays  
Sylvia Wynter: *The Hills of Hebron*; essays